[Rajyasevapravina G. Parameswaran Pillai.]

Order 21.

The question that order 21 stands part of the rule was put and carried.

Orders 22 to 39.

The question that orders 22 to 39 stand part of the rule was put and carried.

Order 40.

The question that order 40 stands part of the rule was put and carried.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI: Sir, I move that the amendments to the first schedule of the Civil Procedure Code be passed.

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI: I second it.

The motion was put and carried.

THE TRAVANCORE PREVENTION OF BEGGING BILL.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI: Sir, I may be permitted to move the Bill for the prevention of begging in Travancore.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI: Sir, I rise to introduce the Travancore Prevention of Begging Bill and I move that the Bill be read in the Assembly.

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI: I second it.

The motion was put and carried.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI: Sir, the Bill is intended to make begging a crime. The question as to how to deal with this growing evil has long been engaging the attention of Government as well as the public. It will be unjust to deal with begging as a crime and it would be impracticable to do so without making sufficient provision for the protection and maintenance of the really poor and incapacitated among those who largely take to the profession of begging. This could be done only by the bringing into existence of institutions such as poor homes and work houses for the housing and feeding of those people. This requires the co-operation and help of the public. In Trivandrum, as a result of persistent efforts, a poor home and feeding centre has been established and similar homes have recently been brought into existence in Kottayam and also in Alleppey. It has therefore become possible to enact a law to prevent begging at least in these places. Hence the necessity for the present Bill. It will be possible to extend its operation to other places where such homes could be established in future. Necessary provisions have been made in the Bill to enable Government to make Rules for regulating the management of work-houses and special homes and the maintenance and care etc. of the poor.

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MR. C. P. GOPALA PANICKER : I second it.

SECRETARY : The title of the Bill shall be "The Travancore Prevention of Begging Bill."

MR. K. A. MATHEW: Sir, I have great pleasure in supporting the first reading of this Bill. The purpose of the Bill is to prevent begging in our State. There is no doubt that this is a long overdue Bill. There has been demand for legislation not only in municipal areas, but throughout the country to discourage begging. I remember to have served on a committee in Trivandrum constituted for the purpose on which the members of the Trivandrum Corporation also served, This committee was strongly of opinion that steps should be taken to prevent begging and that legislation is a *sine qua non* to that end. Goverment was approached by that Committee to introduce legislation and Government viewed the appeal with sympathy and said that they would move in the matter. I am glad that the Bill has now been introduced. There has been clamour for a legislation of this sort not only in Trivandrum, but also in other places. Beggar relief centres and organisations have been keenly feeling the need of legislation to meet the problem more effectively. Begging is a rapidly spreading problem in Travancore. Those of us living in urban areas come across beggars in large numbers, those who are disabled and destitute and those with able bodies but having no work. It is the duty of the State and the Community to take care of the disabled and provide work for the able bodied. If this Bill is to bear full fruition, there must be popular co-operation and support. I believe that the root cause of beggary is destitution and poverty. I do not believe that this root cause can be removed unless there is a social and economic readjustment. If beggary is to be eradicated the State must sooner or later find a solution to the problem of poverty. So it is one of the most paramount problems which this House, the country and the Government have to face in the interests of the future of our Country. But as it does not come within the immediate purview of this Bill, I do not speak at length on it now. If the question of beggary is to be tackled successfully, it is essential that those who are in charge of the machinery that is contemplated in this Bill should be men imbued with human sympathy. If the Bill is to be consigned to the archives of the Secretariat, I am afraid it is not going to help us very much. Unless the Government is prepared to implement it immediatly, this Bill will remain a dead letter. For enforcing the provisions of this Bill, as I stressed at the outset, the co-operation of the people must be secured. In meeting the needs of this dis-inherited segment of society a new angle of vision and a new line of approach is necessary. We are often tempted to face this problem from the stand point of beggars being a nuisance to society. We must remember that they are human beings suffering owing to the denial of opportunities to live useful and full lives. Mere legislation without the application of human spirit is not going to solve the problem. The Bill has provided for the establishment of special homes and also work houses.

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[Mr. K. A. Mathew.]

Special homes are needed to provide shelter for the disabled and work-houses for able bodied men who do not find work. These are very important provisions of the Bill. Government must move in the matter of opening work houses and special homes. I do not know whether the Act is applicable only to Municipal areas or throughout the State. Piece meal application of this Act may defeat its very purpose. There is no use in introducing it in certain areas of the State because it is very likely that beggars would migrate from those areas to other parts of the State. When the beggar relief centre was started in Kottayam and some steps taken to prevent begging we found beggars escaping to Changanacherry and Alleppey. Therefore, the operation of this Bill must cover the whole of Travancore, if not immediately, at least in the near future. For carrying out the provisions of this Bill the help of Municipalities, the Village Panchayats and Village Unions should be requisitioned and I am sure their co-operation would be forth coming in a large measure.

In the third section of the Bill begging is penalised and those who beg would be fined Rs. 100. I am at a loss to know how this fine could be realised from a beggar. It is too much to impose fine on these poor people. Probably, imprisonment may be a better deterent. I do not wish to go into the details of the Bill at present.

It gives me great pleasure to support the first reading of the Bill. I am sure the Bill will receive the support of the whole country and hope that it will come into force very soon.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI: Sir, in associating myself with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Mathew in supporting this Bill, I have to mention one fact with regard to this Bill. Of course, the spirit underlying this and the objects of the Bill are necessarily to be applauded and supported and we do it. But this is a question of preventing actual beggary, now in existence. Beggars there are many, and we have to prevent the nuisance arising out of these beggars. To prevent the nuisance those people who resort to begging should be provided with some place to live in and they must be given opportunities for learning and doing work. But in supporting the Bill I wish to refer to the question of preventing beggary from its very inception. That is the main aspect of the question that I have to place before the House when I support this Bill. Why was this beggary caused? It is a sequel to the economic and social condition of the society now existing. On the one hand, we try to solve the problem of begging. On the other hand there is the manufacture, as it were of more and more beggars, through expropriation of land, extreme poverty etc. While the number of beggars is really increasing, there is no use of trying to cope with the situation by maintaining a few work houses or beggar homes as we have today. Therefore, this is not the important question that has to be tackled by the Government in the very near future. It is a very radical change that we want. There is no superficial remedy in this matter for a chronic disease, a radical cure is needed.

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In Russia they wanted to fight Syphillis on the one hand while it was growing on the other. But they tackled the problem from its very root and they solved it. They have solved many questions such as beggary, prostitution and all the diseases that are the outcome of the present day social and economic structure and institutions based on it.

It is up to this Government—whether responsible Government is sanctioned or not to tackle this problem in earnest, and try to make a plan in such a way that poverty and beggary are uprooted from their very source. It is only then that this piece of legislation would be of any effect even at the present time, as a forerunner of the begger legislation that is to come.

With these few remarks, I support the Bill.

MR. S. SANKARANARAYANAN TAMPI: I wish to place on record my sincere congratulations for the able measure which the Government are adopting and wishes to legislate upon. In associating myself with the sentiments expressed by the honourable member, Mr. K. A. Mathew, and the honourable member Mr. K. K. Chellappan Pillai, I may also be allowed to observe that this piece of legislation, if it should serve the purpose for which it is intended to be made, must be total in its effect and exhaustive in its manner of dealing. As the honourable member, Mr. Chellappan Pillai, observed, beggary has been the result of the existing social and economic relations that drive even people of importance into the unfortunate realm of beggary. Is there any method by which you can prevent, say, small owners of property from turning into beggars? This is the day of the capitalist. This is the day of large scale industrialists. The agriculturist is every day becoming indebted to the industrialist, to the banker, to the financier and the capitalist. If this state of society were to exist and we are to continue to exist as at present, no doubt the number of beggars may every day increase. Could that be prevented? It is a problem that is confronting us, but unfortunately that being a question which requires revolutionary changes in the existing society for which the Government may not lend support, the Government have nevertheless to be congratulated for having introduced this piece of legislation. But I would request the Government to bear in mind in dealing with this Act that some benefit to orphanages, some benefit to refugees and for the beggars, is not going to solve the problem. For one thing, the Government have very seriously to consider who are beggars. In the Census Report we find that in Travancore there are only 5,000 beggars, and the criterion upon which the beggar population is judged is erroneous and false. It is incorrect. It is imaginary. But who the real beggars in the State are is to be clearly understood. A proper statistics has to be taken; a Commission has to go about taking figures on the matter. I think that the Government, whose foremost policy is that of industrialisation in the State can tackle the problem of beggary effectively in the method I suggested above. Beggary is the result not only of social disintegration. It is caused mainly by unemployment. Of course we find in the western countries many pieces of legislation for preventing beggary. But though they are in the Statute Book,

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[Mr. S. Sankaranarayanan Tampi.]

what we find in those parts are that beggary is conducted in a different disguise. I am told by people who have been to the western countries that people who beg there do not do so as actual beggars. They may carry with them, say, a pair of spectacles or so and they will be selling them to the passers-by, and in the course of selling them they perform the act of begging also. That unfortunate state of affairs should not be allowed to prevail in Travancore. When we embark on this piece of legislation, we must be careful, just and also be very prudent. I once more request the Government to bestow their best attention upon the promulgation of this legislation and support it.

PRESIDENT: Before putting this motion to the vote, I may indicate what the Government's plans are on this subject. Before this legislation was put on the tapis, steps were taken to bring about a census of people who were actually begging both children and adults in certain selected localities. One of those localities was Trivandrum. The Trivandrum Corporation and public opinion generally were in favour of the prevention of beggary. This Government would not introduce any legislation for the prevention of beggary until and unless they were sure that they could deal with all the beggars in the State. A census has to be taken of the beggars, let us say, in Trivandrum. No more beggars would be allowed to come into Trivandrum. That is an essential, component part of this legislation. Steps will have to be taken to undertake a census of beggars in particular localities. Steps should also be simultaneously taken to prevent the influx of people coming from outside and relying upon the measures to be taken by Government in one locality. We can deal with the problem I am afraid, from the financial point of view—only in selected centres. It will not be possible to deal with the whole State straightaway. But Government feel confident that at least in municipal areas it might be tried immediately and so far as certain municipalities are concerned, the experiment will be tried from the next day when the Bill is passed into law. So far as Trivandrum is concerned, Government have come to the definite position that they can tackle the problem of both the able-bodied beggars and the destitute and disabled beggars. The former class of beggars are to be given work in order to enable them to maintain their self-respect and to pay their way at least partially, and the latter class of workers are to be fed. In addition to that, there of course remains the question of dealing with child beggary. Provision will therefore be made for dealing with them by giving them growth in education and in spiritual qualities also. I expect that similar measures can be taken immediately or almost immediately in certain areas such as Kottayam and Quilon and probably Alleppey.

With regard to the larger question that arose,—obviously recognised by honourable members who have raised them—I might say that they depend upon a fundamental reclassification and modification of society. The abolition of beggary in a wider sense involves a change in the ideas of property. Classification of property throughout the State, the elimination of inequalities and what is more, the preservation of that elimination are the first essentials. Russia tried the

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abolition of property and equalisation of property but very soon, in order to forward the industrial policy of Russia, she had to give rise to the inequalities of wages and labour, so that today there are rich men and poor men in Russia and under the present Communistic system there are people who get 40 times as much by way of wages as others. Therefore, the problem is not so simple. The question of social security and of a minimum living condition for every person will no doubt have to be attempted by the world some time later. But these are large questions. At the present moment, we must be able to take a census of beggars, to limit the number of beggars, to send out beggars who come from outside the State by a rigorous process of externment and by devoting our attention to those beggars who are here - both adults and children, able-bodied and disabled, and to deal with such beggars as may be found to be bona fide beggars in the sense of those who are unable to earn their living for no fault of theirs. That is the object of the Bill and the Bill will go forward.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI : I move that the Bill be taken into consideration. In view to the fact that the Bill is not a contentious measure, I pray that Standing Order No. 32 be suspended for the purpose.

PRESIDENT : It is a question which I leave to the House for decision.

The urgency of the matter is this. A Select Committee may be appointed. The Bill itself will not be able to pass both the Houses until the budget session. We are ready with the machinery for starting certain measures within the next fortnight. It is open to the House to decide whether they want the Bill to be referred to a Select Committee or whether they will pass the Bill in its present form and if there are imperfections or defects found thereafter, to deal with them later by way of amendments. Does the House want me to suspend the Standing Order ?

(The House agreed to suspend the Standing Order).

PRESIDENT : Standing Order 32 is suspended.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI : I move that the Bill be taken up for consideration.

Clauses 1 to 18.

The question that Clauses 1 to 18 do stand part of the Bill was put and carried.

Clauses 1 to 18 were added to the Bill.

Title and Preamble.

The question that the Title and Preamble do stand part of the Bill was put and carried.

The Title and Preamble were added to the Bill.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI : I move that the Bill be passed.

The motion was put and carried.

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